

# Mepkin Abbey Garden Volunteer Newsletter October 2017



Preparing for IRMA



Pots taken to GH



The big news this month was Irma. Although she did terrible damage elsewhere, the Abbey did not lose any trees or large limbs. As usual, the faithful Volunteers, under the lead of Craig, got things back in order within a little over a week! Luckily, Maria veered out to sea at our locale.

In September, we got the Hydrangeas and Roses fertilized again and kept up with the spent blooms and mulching. This month we will be renovating on the river side of the Old Dorm where the steps were taken out earlier. We also will divide perennials that have outgrown their space. It is also time for pre-emergent to be put down.

In place of Garden Updates this month, we are featuring the Volunteer Program and the areas we maintain.

Hopefully I will do a better job on the special article this month. I thought we would talk about the Volunteer Program and the various area gardens we maintain for our readers who are unfamiliar with the Program. Six years plus ago, we put together the Program with a Mission, Vision, Protocol as to the Monks and the restricted areas and various maps. Here goes:

#### **Volunteers as Co-Laborers with the Monks**

The Abbey relies on countless volunteers to co-labor with them to continue the monastic tradition of cultivating and caring for creation as stewards, co-creators, and partners with creation to glorify God, conserve, protect and restore nature and to advocate nature's beauty and its power to communicate God's love, provision and peace."

#### **Mepkin Abbey Mission Statement**

"We the monks of Mepkin Abbey, bear witness to the contemplative monastic tradition in this particular place and time in the following ways:...

We make available to our visitors the natural beauty of Mepkin by developing and maintaining the public gardens of the monastery."

#### **Garden Vision Statement**

Mepkin Abbey strives to maintain our gardens in a planned way so that they always look pleasant and present the welcoming face of Mepkin Abbey to the public while bringing a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment to our volunteers.

#### **Volunteer Protocol**

## **In the Monastic Enclosure**

The Monastic Enclosure is everything beyond the brick wall in front of the Church and its imaginary extension to the Senior Wing.

The following are the monk's guidelines for this area:

### **Places of Silence**

- The area of the Church and dormitories is a place of silence. Short necessary exchanges are appropriate, but if we need to prolong them, there are places set aside for such (music Room, Sacristies, Chapter Room and Novitiate Classroom). An easy demarcation for this area is the serpentine wall and its invisible extension to the vicinity of the bike garage. The section of the public walkway stretching from the Library to the Church is a place of "quiet" (subdued talking) where our guests are asked to respect the monastic dwelling nearby. The gathering place in front of the Church is included in this request. All of us need to be mindful of the need for quiet in this area when greeting guests and visitors
- **We ask our volunteers to respect these guidelines while working in these areas. We ask you not to initiate conversation with the monks, or play radios in this area and under no circumstance or for any reason to go to a monk's private room.**

### **Volunteer hours and Service Pins**

Mepkin Abbey Volunteers are asked to report their service hours. This may be done in two ways. Either email the hours to [brstan41@gmail.com](mailto:brstan41@gmail.com) or note them each time you come on the sheet in the Break Room. We ask that you do this so we can use these in any grant we seek for Mepkin and they are a strong statement in our vision and media work. These are added up at the end of June for the twelve previous months before the Annual Volunteer Picnic and Service Pins are awarded. We ask that you wear these when working for identification on the grounds. If you are new and have not worked long enough for a pin, your Volunteer shirt will be your identification.

The Service Pins are awarded in this way:

Black for 50 hours

Red for 150 hours

Green for 300 hours

Purple for 500 hours

Blue for 750 hours

Gold for 1000 hours

These are awarded at the July picnic and are cumulative.

## **Identified Mepkin Abbey Gardens**

### **Oak Allee:**



## Firefighters Memorial Garden



## Labyrinth Garden



Aerial of the Labyrinth





Labyrinth in Bloom

**St. Anthony Guest House**



**Store Garden  
Arbor, St. Ann's, Gallery**



Front



Back with Arbor and Porch

### St. Clare's Garden









**St. Gerard's Garden**





**Permanent Creche on Walk to Church**



**Church/Library Walk Garden**



**Park at Library**



**Rock River along Walk**



**Church**



**Church Garden (all sides)  
Monk Cemetery**







**Cloister**









**Vegetables in Cool Weather**



**Raised bed in Summer**

**Old Dorm (both sides)**







**Administration Garden  
(both sides)**



**Cloister Side**



**Front Entry Side**



**Retreat Center Garden**



**Sacred Heart Grotto**



**Luce Garden**



**Upper Pond Garden**



**Lower Pond Garden**



**View across Lower Pond**

**Columbarium & Ravine Garden  
Wood Sculpture Garden**





Entrance Walk to Niches



Niches



Sculpture bed (one of two)





Walk to Niches



Steps down to Bridge to Laurens Cemetery from Columbarium

**Laurens Cemetery Garden**





**St. Joseph's Grotto**



**St Benedict's Garden**



**Orchard**





Blackberries



Raspberries



Figs





Blueberry Blossoms



Persimmons



Orange Blossoms

**Secular Cemetery and Statue Garden**



**African American Cemetery**



**Greenhouses**





### **Odds and Ends**

Lucky for us we have three new Volunteers. Two are Mormon Volunteers and William Boyd is an EMS in Dorchester County! Please welcome them! This is a real Godsend for us as we have several of the men vacationing, having surgery and the like. We need all the help we can get with the Creche Festival coming! We are always in need of Garden Volunteers—any day!



Sister Olivia and Elder Oliver



William Boyd

## Spotlight on a Volunteer

In an effort to get to know each of you a little better, we are choosing a garden volunteer each month to answer a few questions and submit a brief bio for the monthly newsletter. This month we have chosen volunteer Karen Roberts. Karen has been volunteering at Mepkin for the past few years and usually comes out twice a week. She can be found most days working at the front of the store or in the midst of a giant stand of azaleas. Karen has earned the nickname “Jungle Jane” for her expert ability to remove large vines from some of the most difficult areas on the property. It’s not unusual for me to pass by a thick stand of azaleas several times during the course of a morning only to catch a glimpse of color in the brush and realize Karen is in the midst of this jungle pulling weeds, clipping vines, and trimming azaleas. It’s amazing to witness!





Here is a brief bio from Karen:

I was born at Conway Hospital in Horry, SC. My Grandfather, Henry Roberts, gave me a great appreciation for the land and its plants. He also had my family on the front steps of church each time the church doors opened. He was a firm believer that everyone was the same underneath their skin. He and my other grandparents kept people in our community from starving and being homeless – a lesson in giving I've not forgotten. My hobbies include fishing, gardening, crocheting, and watching Korean dramas. I have three children, one daughter-in-law, one grandson, and two cats.



1. Who would you want with you if you were stranded on a deserted island? My daughter Catherine because she is very resourceful.
2. If you could do anything you wanted right now, what would it be? Go to Mammoth Cave.

3. If money was no object, what would you do all day? I would find worthwhile projects where I could give my time.
4. Where do you most want to travel, but have never been? Paris
5. What is your favorite memory? Going to Butterfly World in Florida
6. What is your favorite movie? "While You Were Sleeping"
7. What is the one thing that should be taught in school that isn't already? Respect for other people's property and our environment (ex: don't throw trash on the road.).
8. What one thing would you change if you had to do it over? I would have married my High School sweetheart.
9. If you could share a meal with three people from the past, who would they be? My Grandfather Henry, my Aunt Jean, and author Frank Hurbert.
10. What actor/actress would play you in your life movie? Emma Roberts

11. Why do you volunteer at Mepkin? It fills me with hope and joy.

Well, did you get through all of this? I was a bit overwhelmed to realize the vast area we cover and I was unable to find photos for St. Peter/St. Mark Guest House exterior grounds and St. Bernard since we redid it. This is all on me this month, as I have been in Tennessee for over a month with a friend who was making her final journey. Craig and Ursula have carried the torch for me—as well as those fabulous Volunteers. Howard and Langhorne were willing but I decided I would just get the issue out. We have two projects I am helping with that start this month—redoing the hill by the Old Dorm where we took out the unused steps and Phase 2 of the Columbarium, plus renovating the top of the Bridge to Laurens Cemetery and the steps up to the Cemetery. I hope you are enjoying this fall weather. Get ready for November—and the Creche Festival! They have been meeting regularly and I know it will be outstanding as usual.

Tune in next month! dottie